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CONGRESSMAN ED CASE
2ND DISTRICT, HAWAII

ISLANDS OF HAWAII, MAUI, Kaho'OLAWE, LANAI,
MOLOKAI, O'AHU (WINDWARD, NORTH SHORE,
CENTRAL, LEEWARD), KAUAI AND NI'HAU,
AND NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

May 22, 2006

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AND TECHNOLOGY

Docket Clerk
Fruit and Vegetables Program
AMS, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Stop 0243
Washington, D.C. 20250-0243

Dear Docket Clerk:

Re: Docket No. FV06-1290-1 PR
Specialty Crops Block Grant Program: Notice of Request for Approval of
a New Information Collection - Proposed Rule

I am writing to ensure that the definition of specialty crops contained in the proposed rule—"fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture)"—will be interpreted as intended in the original legislation to include all non-program crops. I am concerned because farmers in my state of Hawaii grow many crops that are not familiar to farmers on the mainland. One example is gobo, a root crop used for food in Hawaii, but one that in the past was incorrectly classified by USDA in Washington as a weed.

While I am not sure that we need to sorry too much about exotic fruits and vegetables grown in Hawaii, as I don't see how the bill could be interpreted as not applying to them, I am more concerned about crops that may not easily fit the normal definition of fruits and vegetables, like coffee, cacao, seed crops, algae and seaweed, kava, ginger root, vanilla, and lavender. And it is unclear whether other crucial crops like honey or sugarcane would be covered.

If you review the discussion during markup of this legislation in my House Agriculture Committee, you will see that the intention was a broad definition of specialty crops. Please confirm that this is in fact the intended definition under the proposed rule.

With aloha,

Ed Case

ED CASE
United States Congressman
Hawaii, Second District

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Hawaii Specialty Crops

- Algae/seaweed
- Cacao
- Coffee
- Flowers (cut) and foliage (cut), including flowers used for leis
- Ginger root
- Honey and beeswax
- Kava
- Lavender
- Macadamia nuts
- Nursery products
- Seed crops
- Sugarcane
- Vanilla beans
- Vegetables (examples)
 - bittermelon
 - burdock
 - daikon
 - dasheen
 - gobo
 - lotus root
 - taro
- Fruits (examples)
 - abiu
 - atemoya
 - avocados
 - bananas
 - breadfruit
 - caimito
 - canistel
 - cherimoya
 - durian
 - guava
 - jaboticaba
 - jackfruit
 - langsat
 - longan
 - loquat
 - lychee
 - mango
 - mangosteen
 - papaya
 - persimmon
 - pineapple
 - poha
 - rambutan
 - rollina
 - sapodilla
 - starfruit
 - white sapota